

400 State Street

Designation Status: Eligible to be Designated a Historic Resource

Assessor Parcel Number: 037-212-021

Historic Name: Woods Garage

Constructed: 1910 / 1916

Architectural Style: Vernacular commercial building.

Property Type: Garage and Commercial Storefront

Original Use: Garage

Significance: The City of Santa Barbara establishes historic significance as provided by the Municipal Code, Section 22.22.040. Any historic building that meets one or more of the eleven criteria established for a City Landmark or a City Structure of Merit can be considered significant:

Criterion A. Its character, interest or value as a significant part of the heritage of the City, the State, or the Nation: Originally designed in 1910 as a one-story reinforced concrete building with rear garage addition constructed in 1916. The simple stucco storefront with its undulating parapet, pronounced cornice with subtle pilasters outlining the true divided light fan window over the entrance as well as the true-divided light transoms over the large glass storefront windows contribute to the Spanish Colonial Revival/Mediterranean commercial streetscape of State Street and character of El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District.

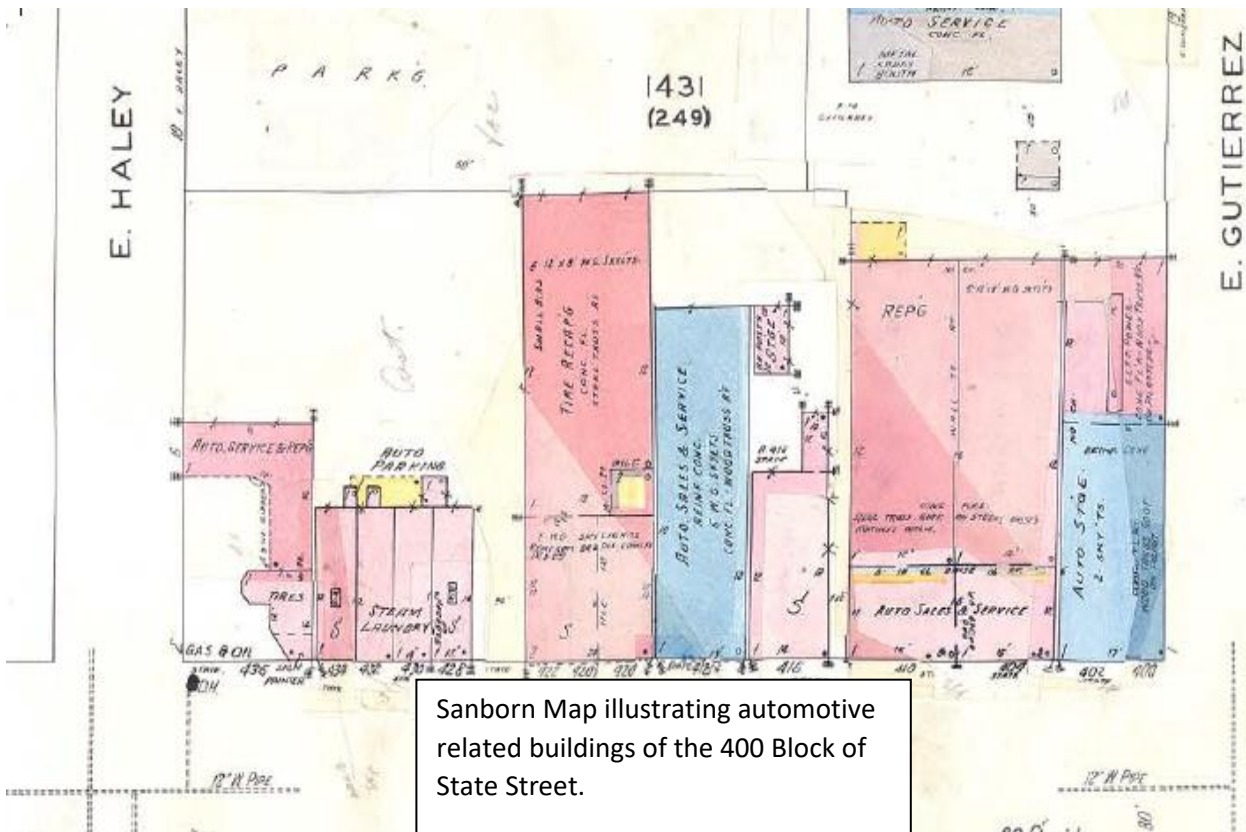


C.1978 Photograph of the building from Caltrans Historic Survey

Constructed as an automobile store with mechanic garage in the rear the building was one of several automobile associated businesses on the street. The automobile store next door at 410 State Street was constructed in 1916 (demolished in 1992), and there were other auto stores and a tire store further down the block (see Sanborn Map below). The impact of the automobile on the broad patterns of American life stands as one of the most significant and prevalent themes of the twentieth century. The importance of the automobile during Santa Barbara's formative years as a tourist mecca and retreat for the wealthy, together with the City's relatively isolated location, to some extent amplified the importance of automotive mobility to the region. The building at 400 State Street is a remnant of a great number of automotive-oriented buildings



410 State Street, the Cadillac building constructed in 1916, was demolished in 1992 for a new building. 400 State Street is a remnant of early automotive-oriented buildings that dominated State Street.

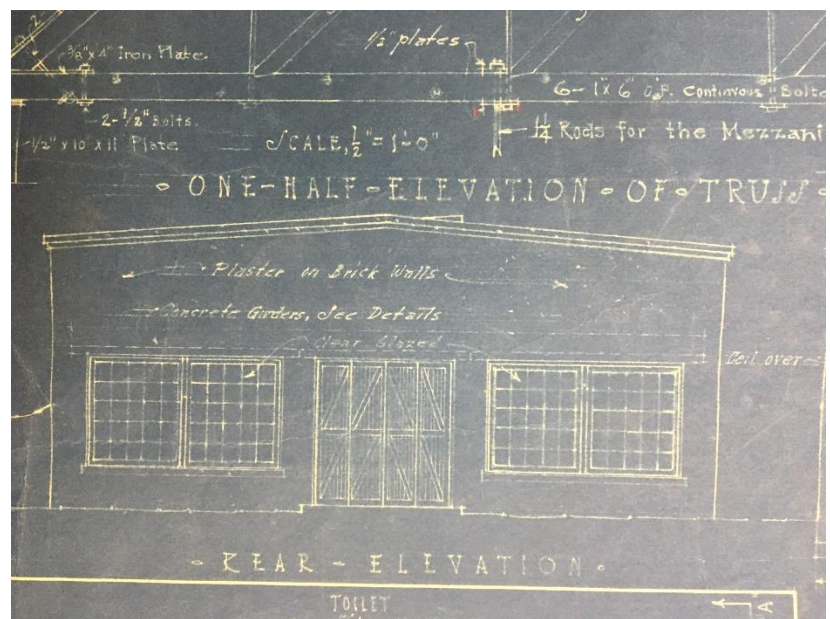


Sanborn Map illustrating automotive related buildings of the 400 Block of State Street.

established on lower State Street during the first three decades of the century. Few of these buildings remain today. As such, 400 State Street remains as a scarce example of an early automotive-oriented building. The building retains sufficient integrity to successfully convey these historical associations. The storefront facing State Street was likely to have been repaired right after the 1925 earthquake to the existing configuration. As the street was heavily damaged in the earthquake and most of the buildings were repaired to conform to a Spanish Colonial Revival/Mediterranean style. There is no evidence that any further alterations were made to the storefront other than that in the 1950s the owners added aluminum storefront doors which were removed and replaced with an appropriate recessed wood doors in 1997. The building continued to be used for automobile purposes with Cadillac and Porsche having leases in the site in the 1970s. The rear of the building is still used as a garage. The building is important to the Santa Barbara's State Street streetscape and to El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District as an original building with its undulating parapet, projecting cornice and pilasters, true divided fan light, and true divided transoms.



Gutierrez Street and rear elevation



1916 drawings of rear elevation.

This building is an example of a small, vernacular commercial interpretation of the Spanish Colonial Revival/Mediterranean style, which became an important part of Santa Barbara's heritage in the 1920s, when the City deliberately transformed its architecture and look from an ordinary western style town into a romantic Spanish Colonial Revival/Mediterranean style city. This transformation was the result of the planning vision of a number of Santa Barbara citizens in the early 1920s with the founding of the Santa Barbara Community Arts Association, which urged that the town identify its individual character and then use planning principles to develop it. As an original 1910/1916 commercial building contributing to the significance of State Street and El Pueblo Viejo Landmark District, the building qualifies as a Structure of Merit under criterion A.

The building embodies elements that demonstrate an outstanding attention to detail, materials, and craftsmanship in the State Street elevation. True divided fan light window over the front entrance and the divided light transom windows over the storefront windows; these are unique details that are no longer found in storefront design that demonstrate quality details, materials, and craftsmanship.



San Buenaventura Research Associates.
Phase One Historic Resource Evaluation
for 410 State Street, City of Santa Barbara.
January 20, 1992.

